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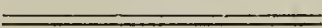
PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK.



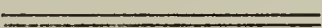
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AGAINST

THE REV. CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D.



EXTRACTS FROM THE PROCEEDINGS. OF  
NOVEMBER 29TH, 1892.



OBJECTIONS PRESENTED BY MR. MCCOOK  
TO THE MOTION TO STRIKE OUT  
CHARGES IV. AND VII. FROM THE AMENDED  
CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.



A motion having been made and seconded to strike from the Amended Charges and Specifications, as served upon Professor Briggs, Charges IV. and VII., the Committee of Prosecution was heard through Mr. McCook.

Amended Charges IV. and VII. are as follows:

#### CHARGE IV.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., being a Minister in said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that many of the Old Testament predictions have been reversed by history, and that the great body of Messianic prediction has not been and cannot be fulfilled, which is contrary to the essential doctrine of Holy Scripture and of the Standards of the said Church, that God is true, omniscient and unchangeable.

#### CHARGE VII.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., being a Minister of said Church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that the processes of redemption extend to the world to come in the case of many who die in sin; which is contrary to the essential doctrine of Holy Scripture and the Standards of the said Church, that the processes of redemption are limited to this world.

Mr. McCook spoke as follows:

In filing objections to the sufficiency of the amended charges and specifications, in form or in legal effect, Professor Briggs, while not waiving any of his rights in the premises, expressed his willingness to go to trial upon the amended charges submitted by the Committee of Prosecution, with the exception of Charges IV. and VII. The Committee asked to take the time

between the sessions of the Judicatory, to carefully examine what Professor Briggs had said, with reference to Charges IV. and VII., so that if the Committee, with the most careful and conscientious desire to save the time of the Presbytery, and to conserve the truth, and while not making any commitment so to do, would be glad to remove the charges objected to, if in the interest of orderly procedure and justice to the truth it could be done.

It is important at this stage of the proceedings, when the Judicatory is considering preliminary objections only, that we should have a clear view as to the object of the orderly presentation, under the terms of the Book of Discipline of charges and specifications.

It cannot be claimed by any one, that charges and specifications which, under the provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of the Book of Discipline, ought to be as brief and concise as possible, should, upon their face or mere statement, furnish ground for the conviction of the accused.

The intention of the Book clearly is, that such charges and specifications should be sufficient to put the accused on his defense. Under these circumstances the duty of the Committee of Prosecution has been fully performed, when by the submission of charges and specifications drawn in strict compliance with the provisions of the Book of Discipline, they have presented grounds for a case, indicating an offense, sufficient to put the accused upon his defense.

At this stage of the proceedings the Judicatory can, with propriety, give consideration to two points only:

FIRST.—Are the charges and specifications in the form required by the Book? To this but one answer can be given, they have been drawn, and are now presented in strict compliance, as to form, with the provisions of the Book.

SECOND.—As to the legal effect of the charges and specifications. This, as a preliminary question, does not call for the Committee of Prosecution to present charges, which by their mere statement, apart from the proof and the arguments which they propose to submit, would secure a conviction.



The words "legal effect," at this stage of the proceedings, can only mean, that if the charges and specifications, as submitted in due form, make out a *prima facie* case, which can probably be sustained by the proofs and arguments as showing that the accused is chargeable with an offense, that is all that the Book requires.

In other words, a *prima facie* case must be made out against the accused in due form, and the charges and specifications must be such, if sustained, to show that the accused has been guilty of an offense within the meaning of Sections 3 and 4 of the Book of Discipline.

The sustaining of the charges as to form and legal effect, of course, does not in any way commit the Judicatory or make the accused subject to discipline, as this can only follow after full trial upon the merits.

#### CHARGE VII.

In the objections filed yesterday to the Seventh of the Amended Charges, Professor Briggs says: "The prosecution impute this doctrine to me, notwithstanding the disclaimer of such teaching which has been submitted to the Presbytery on two different occasions."

Under Charge VII., the Committee of Prosecution charges and offers to prove, that Professor Briggs has taught "that the processes of redemption extend to the world to come in the case of many who die in sin."

This is a question of fact, upon which the Committee, at the proper time, wish to be heard, and the charge is one which the Committee proposes to support with proper evidence. If Professor Briggs now disclaims this doctrine it will be perfectly possible for him to bring forward evidence, at the proper time, in his defense, and the proper time is when the case is heard on the merits.

Professor Briggs' preliminary objections against the Seventh Charge are irrelevant for the following reasons:

- I. The answer "yes" which was made by Professor Briggs to the question submitted by the Directors of Union Seminary,

“Do you believe that the issues of this life are final, and that a man who dies impenitent will have no further opportunity of salvation?” was made by Professor Briggs prior to the publication of documentary evidence as to his teaching, which the prosecution proposes to bring forward.

Since these questions were put by the Seminary Directors and answered by Professor Briggs, the statement in the Inaugural Address upon which Charge VII. is based has been republished with an Appendix. Any disclaimer of the doctrine asserted in Charge VII. is irrelevant at this stage of the trial, unless Professor Briggs is prepared to retract or withdraw the statements which the Committee of Prosecution will offer in evidence in support of the charge.

2. The dilemma presented by Professor Briggs is invalid, the disjunction is incomplete.

Without calling in question his veracity on the one hand, or presenting proof that their interpretation of his doctrine is true, the Committee has a perfect right to show, in the trial of the case on its merits, that, subsequent to the answer given to the questions of the Seminary Directors, the doctrine stated in Charge VII. has been taught and re-affirmed and is now held by Professor Briggs, unless the specified words in the Inaugural, upon which Charge VII. is based, are openly retracted or withdrawn. The charge is based upon Professor Briggs' own words, and they must stand as true, until they have been withdrawn, or until this Judicatory determines that their evident meaning does not import the doctrinal unsoundness charged. His having taught the doctrine we propose to prove; whether he now holds it or not is for him to demonstrate on the trial of the case on the merits. It is for the Judicatory to determine whether the charge has been or has not been sustained, and the Committee is prepared to show that it can be sustained.

The dilemma stated by Professor Briggs ignores altogether a third alternative. Therefore, without impeaching the Professor's veracity, and without placing its own interpretation upon his words, the Committee may show, by evidence and by argument, what doctrine as to redemption is found in Professor



Briggs' Inaugural. If the evidence is incomplete, or if evidence to the contrary be presented in the trial on the merits, then the Judicatory may, by vote, sustain the charge or not, as in its wisdom it may then determine, but there is no place for such an action in the preliminary proceedings.

3. It has been urged that the Seventh of the Amended Charges is a new charge. The original second charge, charged Professor Briggs with teaching a certain doctrine as to the state of the dead. The Prosecuting Committee was and is prepared to prove what this doctrine is. The separation of the original second charge into two of the Amended Charges, is in the interest of clearness, conciseness, of justice and of Professor Briggs. He regards redemption as a general term including all the processes of grace. It is possible that one part of the processes of redemption may be limited to this world, and another be carried on in the world to come. On this account the original Charge II. has been subdivided into the Amended Charges VII. and VIII.

Amended Charge Number VII. charges the teaching of doctrine with respect to some of the processes of redemption after death.

Number VIII. charges the teaching of doctrine with respect to other processes of redemption after death.

The two charges ought not, in fact, to be separated. The Committee will show that they cannot be logically separated, but in order to make the charges specific, and to limit this charge to a single offense, the separation has been made, and this has been done in the interest of justice. The two charges were both necessarily implied in the II. or last of the original charges. The two were separated in the amended charges so as to secure a concise and definite statement, so as to make the issue clear and distinct, and so that the accused might not be left in the dark as to the points of doctrine upon which, it is charged, he holds, and teaches views contrary to the Scriptures and the Standards.

#### CHARGE IV.

With respect to Amended Charge IV., it must be said that

the denial of predictive prophecy, and the denial of the fulfillment of Messianic prediction, which is a branch of predictive prophecy, is an offense only because of the relation of prophecy to the attributes of God. In this respect Charge IV. stands on grounds similar to those of the charges relating to the truthfulness of Scripture.

Predictive prophecy, in the Bible, of which Messianic prediction is a part, is true, and will be fulfilled, if the Scriptures themselves are true. Instead of including Messianic prediction in one of the other charges, it is made the subject of a distinct charge. But why does the denial of the fulfillment of Messianic prediction constitute an offense? Evidently not on account of the respect in which the Prophet is held, nor on account of the respect in which the Scripture *per se* is held, for Scripture is held in reverence, because it is the word of God. Hence the only ground upon which the denial of the fulfillment of Messianic prediction can be regarded as an offense, is because it is a denial of the truthfulness, omniscience and unchangeableness of God.

Professor Briggs, in his Response, has disclaimed the denial of the fulfillment of the details of predictive prophecy, but there are his words in his Inaugural which he has not retracted. Why should he be so careful to disclaim the doctrine that Messianic prediction has not always been fulfilled, were it not that such a doctrine constitutes an offense, and why does it constitute an offense? It is because Messianic prediction, as referred to in Charge IV., is inspired prediction, and if it is inspired prediction, it is the Word of God, and if the Word of God is not true, is not unchangeable, then the attributes of God are assailed. The Committee of Prosecution is prepared to prove this, as it was prepared to prove the original charge.

That the charge concerning Messianic prediction has been separated from the charge respecting Scripture, is in the interests of justice, for Messianic prediction, if inspired by God, must be fulfilled, or there is reflection upon the attributes of God. This the Committee proposes to prove.

One of Professor Briggs' objections to Charge IV. is that it is a new charge.



Specification VII. of the original first charge was as follows: "Dr. Briggs teaches that predictive prophecy has been reversed by history, and that much of it has not and never can be fulfilled." The amended Charge IV. charges Professor Briggs with teaching "that many of the Old Testament predictions have been reversed by history, and that the great body of Messianic prediction has not been and cannot be fulfilled, which is contrary to the essential doctrine of Holy Scripture and of the Standards of the said Church, that God is true, omniscient and unchangeable." It cannot be denied that Messianic prediction is a part of predictive prophecy, or that it is not of the same general nature as the original charge. In the interest of clearness and conciseness, and to make the issue to be met by Professor Briggs more simple, the Committee of Prosecution, following the suggestion in his original response, dropped the use of the more general term "predictive prophecy," quoted, with approval, in his Inaugural Address by Professor Briggs, from Kuenen, and confined the charge to the more restricted and exact point of his teaching, and to his own words, "that the great body of the Messianic prediction has not been and cannot be fulfilled."

Professor Briggs' statement, "if we insist upon the fulfillment of the details of predictive prophecy," &c., is conditional, but his statement embodied in Charge IV. with respect to Messianic prediction, is made unconditionally, and not as a quotation from Kuenen, but is given as his own words, and as expressing his own views. Professor Briggs says, in the Inaugural Address (p. 38), that "the great body of the Messianic prediction has not only never been fulfilled, but cannot now be fulfilled, for the reason that its own time has passed forever." It is upon this definite, clear and distinct statement of Professor Briggs' doctrine of Messianic prediction that Charge IV. is based.

That the Committee have not been mistaken in their reading and understanding of this clause of the Inaugural is strongly evidenced by the position stated by Dr. Edward D. Morris, in his "Calm Review of the Inaugural Address," page 31, where he says:

"Respecting prophecy, Dr. Briggs denies that it constitutes in any direct sense a history before the time; he quotes Kuenen

with approval as having shown that many Old Testament prophecies, instead of having come to pass, have actually been reversed by history; he affirms for himself that the great body of Messianic prediction not only never had been, but cannot now or at any time in the future be fulfilled."

Professor Briggs argues that Amended Charge IV. is a new charge, because of the character of proof proposed to support it. He says in his objection filed to amended Charge IV.: "Instead of citations from the first chapter of the Confession, they give citations from the second chapter of the Confession and the fourth question of the Shorter Catechism in proof of their position, thus showing by their use of evidence that they have a new charge to sustain."

As Professor Briggs has charged the Committee with being fickle, in that it has substituted his own words, in this Charge, for other words quoted by him from another, with his approval, it is important that we should test the accuracy of his second argument against the validity of the amended Charge IV.

If the members of the Judicatory will keep open before them pages 19 to 22 of the amended charges, and pages 36 to 40 of the original charges, they cannot fail to observe how inaccurate, to say the least of it, this claim of Professor Briggs is. He says that "instead of citations from the first chapter of the Confession, they give citations from the second chapter of the Confession." By referring to the prints you will notice that in both cases Section 4 of Chapter I. of the Confession of Faith is given in proof, and quotations from Chapter II. are added. You will also notice that in support of the original Specification VII., and of the Amended Charge IV., the same question and answer from the Shorter Catechism is given, and that is the question: "What is God?" And the answer, of course, gives the attribute of God, which the Committee claimed was involved under the original Specification VII., and is involved under the Amended Charge IV.

It is true that the Committee dropped the citation of certain texts of Scripture under the Amended Charge IV., simply for the reason that the amended charge restricted the area of discussion to a more definite and distinct point, viz.: to Messianic



prediction, and consequently, to avoid surplusage of proof, certain Scripture texts were omitted.

The Committee, after most careful deliberation, conclude:

1st. That Amended Charges IV. and VII. are not in any sense new, and that they are strictly in accord with the rules relating to the amendment of charges and specifications as set out in Section 22 of the Book of Discipline and in the mandate of the General Assembly in this case, in that they strictly conform to the general nature of the original charges and specifications.

2d. That they cannot see their way, consistently with the duty devolved upon them as representing the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in this matter, to withdraw said charges.









